

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

IDENTIFICATION FORM

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COMMENTS:

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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Memorandum

TO : Mr. T. W. Leavitt

FROM : R. J. Gray, Jr.

SUBJECT: LEE HARVEY OSWALD
FCI - RUSSIA

PURPOSE:

To highlight the need to furnish prior information concerning FOIA releases to Legat, Mexico City, or other Legats due to delicate relations maintained by our Legal Attaches with foreign governments.

DETAILS:

Legat, Mexico City, by teletype 12/2/77, advised that material released under FOIA on 11/21/77 was carried as a number of headline stories by Mexico City newspapers beginning 11/23/77, and on 11/30/77, the leading Mexico City daily newspaper, "Excelsior" began a series of front page articles. The stories highlighted sensational allegations about FBI operations in Mexico and other statements drawn from the released material. Legat, Mexico City had not been furnished advance notification of the release of the material, and at that time strongly recommended advance notification be made to all foreign offices when FOIA disclosures were to be made pertaining to countries within the respective territories of the Legats. Although excellent cooperation in investigative matters has always been furnished Legat, Mexico City by Mexican authorities, the Government of Mexico is particularly sensitive about any information being known publicly concerning this cooperation. CIA sent a courier to Mexico City with copies of the release after articles appeared in the newspapers, and Legat, Mexico City was able to obtain a copy of the release from CIA and brief the American Ambassador, who was being questioned by the Mexican Government.

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8-6-92 JTFK 9803 FDD/KSL
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1-14-93 (X)(u)

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1 - Mr. D. W. Moore, Jr.

DATE: 2/24/78

1 - Mr. T. W. Leavitt
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SEE ADDENDUM FOIPA BRANCH PAGE 3.

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FBI/DOJ

Memorandum to Mr. T. W. Leavitt
Re: Lee Harvey Oswald

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In the above instance, Legat, Mexico City would not have been able to respond to the American Ambassador in a timely manner without the aid of CIA. Fortunate for the Legat, CIA placed enough importance on the release to have it flown to Mexico by courier. In this instance, the Legat's office was in real jeopardy. [The Government of Mexico will cooperate as long as the cooperation is not made a matter of public record. The Mexican Government is very nationalistic, and makes every effort in public to appear free of U. S. influence] ~~(X)~~ ~~(C)(u)~~

Legat, Mexico City has now alerted us of a teletype which was sent 1/15/78 from CIA Headquarters to their Chief of Station in Mexico City, concerning release under the FOIA of documents in captioned matter. Legat, Mexico City expressed his concern over the adverse publicity likely to result and the impact on our relations with Mexico. He again cited the need to advise in advance the U. S. Ambassador in Mexico City and the Legat's contacts there, which is made difficult by the insufficient lead time granted in this matter. By teletype to all SACs and Legats dated 1/16/78, notification was made that the above material was to be released 1/18/78. ~~(X)~~

The two above-cited instances point out the necessity of prior notification and the dire consequences of failure to notify the host government and the American Embassy concerned. Failure to properly inform the American Ambassador in advance places our Legat in a most embarrassing position which could possibly be avoided. Failure to promptly provide similar information to the Legal Attache could easily jeopardize our entire Legal Attache operation, taking into account the sensitivities of the host country government. ~~(X)(D)~~ ~~(u)~~

RECOMMENDATION:

~~(u)~~ That in order to avoid placing our foreign operations in jeopardy, future releases effecting our Legats be coordinated in advance with the Intelligence Division.

g
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